

# EXPLORATORY STUDIES AND ACADEMIC PROGRESS (ESAP)

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## ACADEMICS SUPPORT RESOURCES

### COLLEGE SKILLS WORKSHOP

During the fall, the Tutorial Center offers an array of workshops designed to help students succeed in college. All students are eligible to participate in the workshops on such topics as managing time, taking effective class notes, reading texts, building a strong memory, and increasing test-taking skills.

### TUTORIAL CENTER

Slippery Rock University's Tutorial Center provides undergraduate students with academic support through free peer individual and group tutoring services. Tutoring is offered for most Rock Studies Program courses. Tutorial services at Slippery Rock University are personalized and tailored to individuals' academic needs.

Tutoring services also include the proactive Supplemental Instruction (SI) model for academic assistance. Students hired as leaders attend assigned classes and work closely with enrolled students to assist with course content. Leaders facilitate group-tutoring sessions emphasizing cooperative learning activities.

Individual tutoring sessions for students are scheduled by appointment or on a drop-in basis, whereas group and SI sessions are scheduled to accommodate the greatest number of interested students.

## ADVISEMENT RESOURCES

### ACADEMIC ADVISEMENT

Academic Advisement is perhaps the most important faculty/student relationship outside the classroom. The University's academic advisement system is comprised of two primary organizational structures that include First Year Studies advisement and upper-class student/transfer student advisement.

### ADVISEMENT DEVELOPMENT

Exploratory Studies and Academic Progress is responsible for developing adviser and student advising resources, conducting adviser training and first year student advising informational workshops, and maintaining its involvement in retention-related and first-year research activities.

### FIRST YEAR STUDIES (FYRST) ADVISEMENT

The mission of the first-year student experience is to provide personalized support by ensuring that every student receives a high standard of academic advisement services from pre-enrollment to orientation, and throughout the student's first year.

During the student's enrollment in FYRST seminar, he/she should develop a more thorough understanding of his/her own purpose and goals in college as well as those of the university. If a new freshman has declared a major, advisement will be provided by a faculty member selected from

the major department. If no major has been declared, the student will be actively involved in the Exploratory Program and advised by a selected faculty member who has volunteered to work with students. First-year student academic progression will be assisted by the faculty adviser; however, it is the student's responsibility to see that he/she meets all requirements of the degree granting college so that upon completion of the first year of study, the student has attained the minimum number of credits, the specified courses and the minimum grade point average required by the major department.

### UPPER-CLASS STUDENT/TRANSFER STUDENT ADVISEMENT

If an upper-class student has declared a major, they will receive advisement from a faculty member in their major department. If an upper-class student has not declared a major, they will receive advisement from an Exploratory Studies and Academic Progress faculty member, who will help them in their academic progression toward fulfilling their degree requirements and will assist them in declaring an academic major.

Upon entrance into the university, new transfer students are assigned academic advisers from their major program.

## EXPLORATORY (UNDECLARED) PROGRAM

Incoming first-year and transfer students who are undeclared will participate in the Exploratory Studies Program. These students are advised by faculty members in the Exploratory Studies and Academic Progress Department as part of this program.

The Exploratory Studies Program includes engaging activities and support, such as:

- College Success Workshops
- Majors & Minors Exposition
- Designing Your Life and Major Exploration with Career Education and Development
- Developmental Advisement
- Assistance with Transition to New Major

## FRESHMAN SEMINAR (FYRST SEMINAR)

The FYRST Seminar is a one-credit hour course designed especially and exclusively to assist the first-year student with adjusting to college life at Slippery Rock University. This course provides, you, the student, with an opportunity to become integrated into the university's community of learners by exploring the purpose and value of higher education, addressing academic, personal and social transition issues, utilizing campus resources, refining academic skills and learning strategies, developing academic and career goals, and implementing strategies for maintaining personal wellness and overcoming barriers to success.

## LEARNING COMMUNITY CLUSTERS

The university implemented a learning community cluster program which includes a freshman seminar for the purpose of improving students' academic and social integration and establishing an educational environment that maximizes both student-student interaction, student-faculty and student-professional staff interaction. The transition to university life can be challenging and even stressful. The academic and social advantages provided by joining a learning community cluster and freshman seminar initiative can help reduce that stress. By enrolling in the same classes, students are encouraged to meet new people, make

friends easily, form study groups, participate in class discussions, and become engaged with their professors.

Research has shown that the more students connect to the university, the more successful they are in their college experience. Our research shows that by enhancing a student's sense of community and involvement, the freshman seminar and learning community clusters contribute to higher retention rates. Because both freshman seminars and learning communities promote active learning and foster collaboration and cooperation, students who participate are higher achievers and more involved in their classes.